

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested in view of the above amendment and the discussion below.

Applicants invention has been extensively discussed in prior responses including the Amendment filed July 23, 2004 with the following comments being made in light of the above amendment and the current rejection.

Claims 1, 2, 47-49 have been rejected under 35 USC §102 as anticipated by the reference to Funamoto et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,213,381. In addition to incorporating the previous discussion of Funamoto, Applicants submit that newly added independent claim 50 provides a series of method steps not shown or disclosed or made obvious by Funamoto.

Applicants have cancelled Claims 47-49 and provided new independent claim 50 which has been clarified with respect to the present invention with additional limitations addressed to the carrying out of the bonding method and by a pair of shearing blade assemblies each having a shearing blade and a clamp and at least one of the assemblies imparting a clamp supporting force in a direction which is inclined with respect to the thickness direction of the plates. It is submitted that the previously discussed reference to Funamoto does not disclose the assembly having the shearing blade and the clamp in a specific relation, as now claimed. With this specific relationship now claimed in independent claim 50, deformation of the bonded portion is prevented because

the plates are firmly clamped by a pair of clamps in addition to the shearing blade. This is indicated in the specification at page 43, lines 16-17.

Independent claim 50 and the dependent claims 2 and 51-52 are supported in the originally filed specification. The upper and lower shearing blade assemblies of Claim 50 are supported at page 15, lines 19-22. It is apparent from page 15 and the drawing of Fig. 1 that each of the shearing blade assemblies includes a shearing blade and a clamp. Furthermore the clamp supporting force of Claim 50 is discussed at line 25 of page 15. Figures 1, 2, 3 and 8 provide support for the limitation "to impart the clamp supporting force in the incline direction with respect to the thickness direction of the plate".

Applicants submit that not only are the features of independent Claim 50 and the dependent Claims 2 and 51-52 not found in the reference to Funamoto but also that these distinctions provide new and improved functioning over the method disclosed in Funamoto.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that this application containing Claims 2 and 50-52 be allowed and be passed to issue.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

**REMARKS**

This Preliminary Amendment presents a substitute specification, a new set of claims, and an amended Abstract for examination.

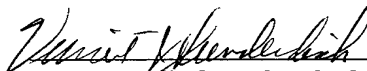
A marked-up version of the substitute specification, showing matter added to the translation by underlining and matter deleted from the translation by strike-through, is attached to this Preliminary Amendment. The substitute specification includes no new matter.

If there are any questions regarding this Preliminary Amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket # 095309.56017US).

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures: Marked-Up Version of Substitute Specification  
Clean Version of Substitute Specification